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CLAIMS 1-23. (CANCELLED)

CLAIM 24. (CANCELLED)

CLAIMS 25-44. (CANCELLED)

45. (Currently amended) A method of forming a refractory metal silicide comprising:

forming a compressive stress inducing material layer over a first side of a substrate;

forming a refractory metal silicide on and in direct physical contact with an upper surface of the compressive stress inducing material layer, the refractory metal silicide comprising a first crystalline phase; and

after forming the refractory metal silicide comprising a first crystalline phase, annealing the refractory metal comprising a first crystalline phase at a temperature of less than or equal to about 750°C to form a refractory metal silicide of a second crystalline phase; the compressive stress inducing material inducing sufficient compressive stress to lower an energy of activation for transformation of the first crystalline phase to the second crystalline phase.

CLAIM 46-51. (CANCELLED)

CLAIM 52-54. (CANCELLED)

55. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 45, where the first crystalline phase is C49 and the second crystalline phase is C54.

56. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 45, where the compressive stress inducing material layer comprises silicon oxide or silicon nitride.

57. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 45, where the refractory metal silicide comprises titanium silicide.

58. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 57, where the first crystalline phase is C49 and the second crystalline phase is C54.

CLAIMS 59-61. (CANCELLED)

CLAIMS 62-70. (CANCELLED)

71. (Currently amended) A method of forming a refractory metal silicide comprising:

forming a compressive stress inducing material layer over a first side of a substrate;

forming a refractory metal silicide on and in direct physical contact with the compressive stress inducing material layer, the refractory metal silicide comprising a first crystalline phase; and

after forming the refractory metal silicide comprising the first crystalline phase, annealing the compressive stress inducing material layer and the refractory metal silicide comprising a first crystalline phase to form a refractory metal silicide of a second crystalline phase; the compressive stress inducing material inducing sufficient compressive stress to lower an energy of activation for transformation of the first crystalline phase to the second crystalline phase.

72. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein forming a compressive stress inducing material layer comprises forming a layer comprising materials chosen from a group consisting of silicon nitride and silicon dioxide.

73. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71, wherein forming a refractory metal silicide comprises forming titanium silicide.

CLAIMS 74-78. (CANCELLED)